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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2583
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0601
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5031
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9010
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 3721
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 1386
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 6059
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7523
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 4258
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3506
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4828
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 8611
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000965

DEPT FOR OES/IHB AMBASSADOR LOFTIS
DEPT FOR EAP/J
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS FOR BURDETT
HHS PASS TO CDC
HHS FOR OGHA
DEPT PASS TO AID/GH/HIDN

SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [KSTH](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: JAPAN'S RESPONSE TO SWINE FLU OUTBREAKS

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This Message is Sensitive But Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

1. Please note action request contained in para. 10.
2. (SBU) Summary: No human cases of swine flu have been reported in Japan. The Japanese government, following an emergency meeting April 25, established a special working group in the Prime Minister's office, issued warnings to Japanese traveling to Mexico, and stepped up health screening for travelers returning from Mexico at Narita and Kansai international airports. The GOJ is taking further steps to keep the public -in Japan and overseas - informed regarding developments in North America and to prepare for a possible outbreak here. The Agriculture Minister has told the press the GOJ has no plans to ban pork products given that they go through an extremely rigorous sanitization process. Japan is the world's largest pork importer and the number one market for U.S. pork. Meeting with the Cabinet April 27, Prime Minister Aso requested ministers to do their utmost to protect public safety. End Summary.
3. As of April 27, 2009 1600 local time, no human cases of Type A H1N1 influenza (Swine Flu) have been reported in Japan.
4. (SBU) In response to the recent swine flu outbreak in North America, Prime Minister Taro Aso instructed a GOJ interagency task force April 25 to strengthen border control measures to prevent the virus from entering Japan. Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare (MHLW) officials confirmed that quarantine officers at Narita and Kansai international airports are stepping up thermographic imaging and physical monitoring to screen passengers arriving from Mexico. The GOJ requested Japan Airlines (JAL) and Aero Mexico, which operate direct flights between Mexico and Japan, to cooperate in the screening procedures, according to press reports. Aero Mexico officials report quarantine officers are boarding its twice-weekly

flight from Mexico before allowing passengers to deplane. The GOJ has not requested any increased monitoring of U.S. arrivals beyond the general screening conducted by quarantine officers, according to MHLW and Japanese Customs officials. The MHLW has started a telephone hotline for returnees from Mexico to report any flu-like symptoms during the 10 days after arrival in Japan.

¶5. (SBU) Meeting with his Cabinet April 27, Prime Minister Aso requested ministers to do their utmost to ensure public safety. According to the statement issued by the PM's Office, ministers agreed to take steps to obtain and disseminate accurate information on the virus, support overseas Japanese citizens, prevent the virus from entering Japan, and prepare for a possible outbreak in Japan. The ministers also discussed production of vaccines.

¶6. (SBU) For outbound travelers, MHLW is distributing leaflets to raise awareness of swine flu among Japanese visiting Mexico and the U.S. Officials in MOFA's Consular Bureau report the Ministry issued a swine flu travel warning and is urging travelers to reconsider travel to Mexico. Media report at least one tour company cancelled a package tour due to depart for Mexico April 29.

¶7. (SBU) Officials at Japan's Self Defense Force (SDF) report there are no discussions of evacuating Japanese citizens from affected countries. (Note: As part of Japan's pandemic action plan, the SDF has a role in evacuating Japanese citizens abroad in the event of a pandemic. End Note)

¶8. (SBU) While media report the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) has instructed animal quarantine offices to screen imports of live pigs for swine flu, there have been no efforts to restrict imports. Agriculture Minister Shigeru Ishiba told the press April 27 the GOJ has no plans to ban pork products

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given that they go through an extremely rigorous sanitization process. Commenting on the swine flu outbreak on a television program April 26, Ishiba said eating pork poses no danger of getting the infection. (Note: Japan is the world's largest importer of pork and the number one market for U.S. pork. Exports of U.S. pork to Japan were \$1.5 billion (447,000 metric tons) in 2008. Unlike beef, there are currently no sanitary barriers to U.S. pork in Japan and sales are experiencing strong growth. Mexico is Japan's fourth largest supplier of pork with trade worth \$233 million in 2008. End Note)

¶9. Among Japanese companies with significant North American operations, Toyota plans to distribute protective masks and hygiene instructions to employees in its offices and factories in North America, according to press reports. Sony, Panasonic, and Toshiba have not announced any plans to take special actions.

¶10. Action Request: Post requests talking points for use with the GOJ and media regarding the situation in the U.S. and on USG response to the swine flu outbreaks, as well as any guidance for American citizens and travelers to the U.S.
ZUMWALT